

What is claimed is:

1. A method of providing on-line assistance to persons having an affiliation with an academic institution, comprising:

a) receiving information about a plurality of users, each of said plurality of users having an affiliation with an academic institution, and storing said information in a memory of a host computer, wherein said information includes data on courses taken by each of said plurality of users,

b) accepting a query, from one of said plurality of users, concerning a particular course at an academic institution, and

c) providing a name of at least one person who has taken or is taking said particular course at said academic institution, so as to allow said one of said plurality of users to contact said at least one person.

2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising providing on-line tutoring to said users, the on-line tutoring being provided by a person whose name was provided in step (c).

3. The method of Claim 1, further comprising forming an on-line study group having members including said one of said plurality of users and said at least one person found in step (c), and enabling on-line communication among members of the study group concerning the course specified in step (b).

4. A method of providing on-line assistance to persons having an affiliation with an academic institution, comprising:

a) receiving information about a plurality of users, wherein said users have an affiliation with an academic institution, and storing said information in a memory of a host computer,

b) accepting a request from one of said users for communication with

others of said users, and

c) connecting said one of said users to others of said users so as to permit real-time on-line communication between said one of said users and said others of said users.

5. The method of Claim 4, wherein step (b) comprises accepting a specification of a particular organization, and wherein step (c) comprises connecting said one of said users with other users who are members of the specified organization.

6. The method of Claim 5, wherein at least some of said other users are selected to come from different academic institutions from said one of said users.

7. The method of Claim 4, wherein the method includes receiving information, from said one of said users, concerning a residential facility in which said one of said users lives, and wherein step (c) comprises connecting said one of said users with other users who live in a same residential facility.

8. The method of Claim 4, wherein the method includes receiving information, from said one of said users, concerning a location from which said one of said users originates, and wherein step (c) comprises connecting said one of said users with other users who have originated from a same location.

9. The method of Claim 4, wherein the method includes receiving information, from said one of said users, concerning an academic field, and wherein step (c) comprises connecting said one of said users with other users who have a connection with said academic field.

10. The method of Claim 4, wherein step (a) includes storing information about courses currently being taken by each user, and wherein step (c) comprises connecting said one of said users to others of said

users who are taking a specified course currently being taken by said one of said users.

11. A method of providing on-line assistance to persons having an affiliation with an academic institution, comprising:

a) receiving information about a plurality of users, each of said plurality of users having an affiliation with an academic institution, and storing said information in a memory of a host computer,

b) accepting, from one of said plurality of users, a specification of a location of origin, and

c) providing a list of users, to said one of said plurality of users, who have an association with said location of origin.

12. The method of Claim 11, further comprising providing an email connection to any one of said list of users.

13. A method of providing on-line assistance to persons having an affiliation with an academic institution, comprising:

a) receiving information about a plurality of users, each of said plurality of users having an affiliation with an academic institution, and storing said information in a memory of a host computer,

b) accepting, from one of said plurality of users, a specification of an academic field, and

c) providing a list of users, to said one of said plurality of users, who have an association with said academic field.

14. The method of Claim 13, further comprising providing an email connection to any one of said list of users.

15. A method of providing on-line assistance to persons having an affiliation with an academic institution, comprising:

a) receiving information about a plurality of users, each of said

users having an affiliation with an academic institution, and storing said information in a memory of a host computer,

b) storing, in the memory of the host computer, documents pertaining to courses taught at at least one academic institution,

c) accepting a query from one of said plurality of users concerning a course at an academic institution, and

d) providing at least some of the documents, stored in step (b), and associated with the course specified in step (c), to said one of said plurality of users.

16. The method of Claim 15, wherein step (b) is preceded by the step of accepting, from any of said plurality of users, documents pertaining to courses taught at at least one academic institution.

17. The method of Claim 16, wherein said documents are selected from the group consisting of research papers, assignments, and lecture notes.

18. A method of providing on-line assistance to persons having an affiliation with an academic institution, comprising:

a) receiving information about a plurality of users, each of said plurality of users having an affiliation with an academic institution, and storing said information in a memory of a host computer,

b) storing, in the memory of the host computer, a list of persons who wish to employ others graduating from a particular academic institution,

c) accepting, from one of said plurality of users, a specification of an academic institution, and

d) providing a list, to said one of said plurality of users, of persons whose names were stored in step (b), and who wish to employ others graduating from the academic institution specified in step (c).

19. A method of providing on-line assistance to persons having an affiliation with an academic institution, comprising:

a) receiving information about a plurality of users, each of said plurality of users having an affiliation with an academic institution, and storing said information in a memory of a host computer, said information including notices concerning courses being taken by each of said users, and

b) providing said notices to said users, wherein the notices provided to each user correspond to courses being taken by said user.

20. The method of Claim 19, wherein step (a) includes receiving information about an academic institution attended by said user, and wherein the method also comprises transmitting, to said user, general notices of potential interest to persons associated with said academic institution.

21. A method of providing on-line assistance to persons having an affiliation with an academic institution, comprising:

a) enrolling a plurality of users as members of an electronic community, said users having an affiliation with an academic institution, and storing information about said users in a memory of a host computer,

b) receiving information from at least some of said users concerning merchandise being offered for sale by said at least some of said users, and making said information available to all members of said electronic community,

c) accepting bids from other users for said merchandise, and

d) matching sellers and buyers to consummate sales of said merchandise.

22. The method of Claim 21, wherein said merchandise comprises tickets to events at or near an academic institution.

23. The method of Claim 22, wherein said tickets comprise student-specified tickets.

24. The method of Claim 23, further comprising receiving bids and offers for merchandise from persons outside said electronic community.

25. A method of compiling an electronic scrapbook for students at an academic institution, comprising:

a) enrolling a plurality of users as members of an electronic community, said users being students at an academic institution, and storing information about said users in a memory of a host computer,

b) periodically receiving information from at least some of said students, and storing said information in the memory of the host computer, and

c) retrieving all of said information received from a particular student, and making said information available to said particular student.

26. The method of Claim 25, wherein step (b) includes receiving scanned photographs uploaded to the host computer from a computer operated by said at least some of said students.

27. The method of Claim 25, wherein step (b) includes receiving scanned printed memorabilia uploaded to the host computer from a computer operated by said at least some of said students.

28. A method of providing on-line assistance to students at an academic institution, comprising:

a) receiving information about a plurality of students, said information including information about an academic institution attended by each of said students, and storing said information in a memory of a host computer,

b) storing, in the memory of the host computer, information about at least one merchant offering goods or services in a vicinity of an academic institution,

c) accepting, from at least one of said students, a list containing

at least one merchant whose offerings are of interest to said at least one of said students, and

d) providing, to said at least one of said students, information about promotions offered by all merchants appearing on said list.

29. The method of Claim 28, wherein the information provided in step (d) includes a personalized discount coupon.

30. A system for providing on-line assistance to persons having an affiliation with an academic institution, comprising:

a) a programmed computer having a memory, the memory containing information about a plurality of users, each of said plurality of users having an affiliation with an academic institution, wherein said information includes data on courses taken by each of said plurality of users,

b) the computer being programmed to accept a query, from one of said plurality of users, concerning a particular course at an academic institution, and

c) the computer comprising means for providing a name of at least one person who has taken or is taking said particular course at said academic institution, so as to allow said one of said plurality of users to contact said at least one person.

31. The system of Claim 30, wherein the computer comprises means for providing on-line tutoring to said users, the on-line tutoring being provided by a person identified by the computer in response to a query from a user.

32. The system of Claim 30, wherein the computer comprises means for forming an on-line study group having members including said one of said plurality of users and said at least one person located by the computer,

the computer comprising means for enabling on-line communication among members of the study group concerning the course specified by said one of said plurality of users.

33. A system for providing on-line assistance to persons having an affiliation with an academic institution, comprising:

a) a programmed computer having a memory, the memory containing information about a plurality of users, wherein said users have an affiliation with an academic institution,

b) the computer being programmed to accept a request from one of said users for communication with others of said users, and

c) the computer comprising means for connecting said one of said users to others of said users so as to permit real-time on-line communication between said one of said users and said others of said users.

34. The system of Claim 33, wherein the computer is programmed to accept a specification of a particular organization, and wherein the computer is programmed to connect said one of said users with other users who are members of the specified organization.

35. The system of Claim 34, wherein at least some of said other users are selected to come from different academic institutions from said one of said users.

36. The system of Claim 33, wherein the computer is programmed to receive information, from said one of said users, concerning a residential facility in which said one of said users lives, and wherein the computer is programmed to connect said one of said users with other users who live in a same residential facility.

37. The system of Claim 33, wherein the computer is programmed to receive information, from said one of said users, concerning a location from which said one of said users originates, and wherein the computer



comprises means for connecting said one of said users with other users who have originated from a same location.

38. The system of Claim 33, wherein the computer is programmed to receive information, from said one of said users, concerning an academic field, and wherein the computer comprises means for connecting said one of said users with other users who have a connection with said academic field.

39. The system of Claim 33, wherein the memory contains information about each course currently being taken by each user, wherein the computer comprises means for connecting said one of said users to others of said users who are taking a same specified course as said one of said users.

40. A system for providing on-line assistance to persons having an affiliation with an academic institution, comprising:

a) a programmed computer having a memory, the memory containing information about a plurality of users, each of said plurality of users having an affiliation with an academic institution,

b) the computer being programmed to accept, from one of said plurality of users, a specification of a location of origin, and

c) the computer comprising means for providing a list of users, to said one of said plurality of users, who have an association with said location of origin.

41. The system of Claim 40, wherein the computer comprises means for providing an email connection to any one of said list of users.

42. A system for providing on-line assistance to persons having an affiliation with an academic institution, comprising:

a) a programmed computer having a memory, the memory containing information about a plurality of users, each of said plurality of users having an affiliation with an academic institution,

b) the computer being programmed to accept, from one of said plurality of users, a specification of an academic field, and

c) the computer comprising means for providing a list of users, to said one of said plurality of users, who have an association with said academic field.

43. The system of Claim 42, wherein the computer comprises means for providing an email connection to any one of said list of users.

44. A system for providing on-line assistance to persons having an affiliation with an academic institution, comprising:

a) a programmed computer having a memory, the memory containing information about a plurality of users, each of said users having an affiliation with an academic institution,

b) the memory also containing documents pertaining to courses taught at at least one academic institution,

c) the computer being programmed to accept a query from one of said plurality of users concerning a course at an academic institution, and

d) the computer comprising means for providing at least some of the documents, stored in the memory of the computer, and associated with a course specified by said one of said plurality of users, to said one of said plurality of users.

45. The system of Claim 44, wherein the computer is programmed to accept, from any of said plurality of users, documents pertaining to courses taught at at least one academic institution.

46. The system of Claim 45, wherein said documents are selected from the group consisting of research papers, assignments, and lecture notes.

47. A system for providing on-line assistance to persons having an affiliation with an academic institution, comprising:

a) a programmed computer having a memory, the memory containing

information about a plurality of users, each of said plurality of users having an affiliation with an academic institution,

b) the memory containing a list of employers who wish to employ others graduating from a particular academic institution,

c) the computer being programmed to accept, from one of said plurality of users, a specification of an academic institution, and

d) the computer comprising means for providing a list, to said one of said plurality of users, of employers whose names are stored in the memory of the computer, and who wish to employ others graduating from a specified academic institution.

48. A system for providing on-line assistance to persons having an affiliation with an academic institution, comprising:

a) a programmed computer having a memory, the memory containing information about a plurality of users, each of said plurality of users having an affiliation with an academic institution, said information including notices concerning courses being taken by each of said users, and

b) the computer comprising means for providing said notices to said users, wherein the notices provided to each user correspond to courses being taken by said user.

49. The system of Claim 48, wherein the memory of the computer includes information about an academic institution attended by said user, and wherein the computer also comprises means for transmitting, to said user, general notices of potential interest to persons associated with said academic institution.

50. A system for providing on-line assistance to persons having an affiliation with an academic institution, comprising:

a) a programmed computer having a memory, the memory containing

information about a plurality of users comprising members of an electronic community, said users having an affiliation with an academic institution,

b) the computer being programmed to receive information from at least some of said users concerning merchandise being offered for sale by said at least some of said users, the computer being programmed to make said information available to all members of said electronic community,

c) the computer comprising means for accepting bids from other users for said merchandise, and

d) the computer comprising means for matching sellers and buyers to consummate sales of said merchandise.

51. The system of Claim 50, wherein said merchandise comprises tickets to events at or near an academic institution.

52. The system of Claim 51, wherein said tickets comprise student-specified tickets.

53. The system of Claim 52, wherein the computer is programmed to receive bids and offers for merchandise from persons outside said electronic community.

54. A system for compiling an electronic scrapbook for students at an academic institution, comprising:

a) a programmed computer having a memory, the memory containing information on a plurality of users comprising members of an electronic community, said users being students at an academic institution,

b) the computer being programmed to receive, periodically, information from at least some of said students, the computer including means for storing said information in said memory, and

c) the computer comprising means for retrieving all of said information received from a particular student, and for making said information available to said particular student.

55. The system of Claim 54, wherein the computer is programmed to receive scanned photographs uploaded to the computer from another computer operated by said at least some of said students.

56. The system of Claim 54, wherein the computer is programmed to receive scanned printed memorabilia uploaded to the computer from another computer operated by said at least some of said students.

57. A system for providing on-line assistance to students at an academic institution, comprising:

a) a programmed computer having a memory, the memory containing information about a plurality of students, said information including information about an academic institution attended by each of said students,

b) the memory containing information about at least one merchant offering goods or services in a vicinity of an academic institution,

c) the computer being programmed to accept, from at least one of said students, a list containing at least one merchant whose offerings are of interest to said at least one of said students, and

d) the computer comprising means for providing, to said at least one of said students, information about promotions offered by all merchants appearing on said list.

58. The system of Claim 57, wherein the information provided by the computer comprises a personalized discount coupon.